U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE



Request for Applications

for

Research Grants to Improve FSP Access
Through Partnerships and New Technology

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

January 5, 2001

3:00 P.M. - Eastern Standard Time

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

USDA, Food and Nutrition Service
Contract Management Branch
Attention: Bernice Cockrell or Jorge Bernardo
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 220
Alexandria, Virginia 22302
Telephone: (703) 305-2250

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Part 1: Introduction_

As authorized under Section 17(a)(1) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is soliciting proposals to award multiple grants.

Funds have been set aside by the FNS of the USDA in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 for research on educating food stamp potentially eligible persons not currently participating in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) about the benefits, eligibility rules, and application procedures of the Program.

FNS plans to award funds to public/private partners to explore various strategies to reach potentially eligible households. FNS will award at least \$3 million in funds and is soliciting project proposals at any amount up to \$300,000 each.

When will the funds be awarded? FNS expects to award the grant funds to selected grantees in January 2001. Nothing in this solicitation should be construed as committing FNS to the award of any particular number or size of projects. If additional grant funds become available, FNS may make additional new awards under this solicitation during FY 2001.

What type of funds will be awarded? FNS expects to award competitive grants or cooperative agreements under this announcement. Applicants need not specify the type of award in their proposal. FNS reserves the right to determine the type of award.

- Competitive Grants: Will be supported when the approach does not require substantial involvement between FNS staff and the recipient during the performance of the award.
- Cooperative Agreements: Will be supported when the approach requires more substantial involvement between FNS and the awardees.

What are the time frames to spend the funds? Awardees will be allowed to use the grant funds for the duration of the project period, but not to exceed 24 months.

What types of reports will be required? Quarterly progress reports will be required in a format prescribed by FNS. At the conclusion of the project, grantees must also produce a final report of their project in a format prescribed by FNS. The report will show the number of individuals reached during the course of the project, lessons learned, what worked, what didn't work, how others might replicate the project's successes, and recommendations for future projects.

Who can answer questions? If you have questions relating to the project description, background information, other programmatic areas, budget preparation, or other administrative matters, the following procedures should be used:

Questions may be submitted in writing, by e-mail, by fax, in person, or by telephone to the address or telephone number shown below:

USDA/FNS

Contract Management Branch
Attn: Bernice Cockrell or Jorge Bernardo
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 222
Alexandria, VA 22302

Telephone: (703) 305-2250

Fax: (703) 305-2071

 $E-mail\ Address:\ FSPGrantQuestions@fns.usda.gov$

As long as the information requested is for clarification purposes only, oral responses via telephone or in person will be given. However, to ensure fairness in the competition, questions regarding changes in the scope of requirements and essential information not available to all applicants will be responded to *in writing only* and the information given will immediately be made available on the FNS web site.

For questions relating to budget preparation and/or other administrative matters, responses will be limited only to that which assists applicants understanding of the instructions for completion of the application form and

the rules and opportunities for Federal assistance, rather than to actually help the applicant prepare a budget or complete an application.

What is the closing date for applications? All applications must be received by FNS no later than 3:00 PM E.S.T. on Friday, January 5, 2001. Faxed and electronic applications will not be accepted.

How many copies of the applications must be submitted? FNS is requesting four hard copies of your application package. If your organization has computer capabilities, FNS is requesting that a disk or a CD-ROM containing your proposal be included with your package.

Who can apply? In general, any interested non-food stamp governmental authority (e.g., State/local school district, public health clinic, etc.) and/or nonprofit organizations (e.g., advocacy organizations, faith-based organizations, community groups, etc.) may apply.

Current FNS awardees may compete under the requirements of this solicitation but **NOT** for extensions of previously funded projects. All applications received by the deadline will be considered for these **new** awards.

Who will receive the award? The award will be made to the lead organization.

Are statements of commitment or memoranda of understanding mandatory? Yes, copies of statements of commitment and/or memoranda of understanding with State/local food stamp offices are required. At a minimum, this relationship should assure access to FSP administrative data needed to complete a project report (under prevailing disclosure and privacy policies of the FSP).

Statements of commitment or memoranda of understanding from partner organizations, if any, are encouraged.

What is the purpose of the research? For this application, FNS seeks research that will educate food stamp eligible persons not currently participating in the FSP about the benefits of the Program and how to apply for these benefits.

What are the target groups for this research? The target groups for research are underserved eligible persons, particularly:

- low-income (unemployed and working) families with children;
- former or current recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);
- Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS);
- elderly individuals or families; and/or,
- immigrants and non-English speaking minorities.

What types of models is FNS seeking? FNS seeks innovative models that:

- build on community partnerships to help State agencies reach underserved populations such as those listed above;
- build on partnerships that provide culturally appropriate outreach strategies to reach immigrants and non-English speaking minorities;
- help eliminate the stigma of welfare;
- facilitate "one stop shopping" and other coordinated customer service strategies;
- utilize technology such as the State FSP web site to educate customers about the FSP, allow customers to download application forms and/or to electronically file applications;
- utilize existing FNS nutrition education messages to promote the nutritional benefits of the FSP; and/or,
- allow customers to prescreen themselves or others for FSP benefits.

What are some particular characteristics of the model that FNS is seeking? FNS is seeking:

- Modest-scale projects that may be feasible for widespread replication if proven effective and efficient.
- Customer-oriented projects carried out by organizations and groups with close ties to the target population groups mentioned above. These could

include schools, health clinics, faith-based groups, food banks, community organizations, and other entities.

- Research designed to test joint public/private partnership models that deliver good customer service.
- Research that can identify critical barriers to food stamp participation among their customer group(s) and can develop specific activities through collaborative working relationships and interactions to effectively address and overcome these barriers.
- Research that will produce a final report showing what worked, what did not work, and lessons learned.

Are letters of endorsement needed? Yes. Two letters of endorsement from organizations and/or members of the community that are familiar with your organization are required.

Should nonprofit organizations applying for the grant submit a copy of their IRS Determination Letter, Form 501(c)(3)? Yes. Nonprofit organizations should include a copy of their IRS Determination Letter, Form 501 (c)(3) or proof of application for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Should nonprofit organizations applying for the grant submit a list of their Board of Directors and a financial statement? Yes. Nonprofit organizations should submit a list of Board of Directors and a financial statement signed by a Treasurer or any Officer of the Board.

Can slides, tapes, brochures, pamphlets, etc. be included in the application package for submittal to the grant panel? No.

What will be included in the application package? Applicants must submit an application package, which includes:¹

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¹ The regulations governing the attached certifications (i.e., Drug-Free Workplace, Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension, and Anti-Lobbying restrictions) require that a grantee submit the required certification with each new application package.

- a grant application;
- a Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance;
- . a Standard Form 424A, Budget Summary;
- a Standard Form 424B, Assurances; and,
- the additional certifications as included in the attachments to this solicitation document.

Part 2: Background Information_

As of July 2000, participation in the FSP had declined by nearly 40 percent from its peak in March 1994. This decline in participation can be explained in part by a healthy economy and welfare reform. However, these two factors alone do not explain the decline. Between 1995 and 1999, the drop in the number of food stamp participants was twice as large as the drop in the number of people living in poverty. Because of this significant and not fully understood decline in participation, the FSP is only reaching about 60 percent of individuals who are eligible for program benefits.

There is a concern that working families may not be aware that they can continue to receive food benefits as they move from welfare to work. These families may believe that since they are working and no longer eligible for TANF, they, also, are not eligible for food stamps.

As part of our efforts to educate individuals about the FSP and to help improve access to the FSP, a national toll free number was established in April 1999. The number is 1-800-221-5689. The purpose of this toll free number is to provide individuals with information about FSP eligibility requirements.

On July 14, 1999, President Clinton publicly announced a concerted effort to help those families who may be entitled to FSP benefits. President Clinton directed USDA to take steps to improve FSP access, which include:

- Issuing guidance making it easier for families to own a reliable car;
- Providing States with new options to simplify income reporting rules; and,
- A FSP public education campaign, enhancements to the USDA food stamp toll free number, and Program Access Guides.

On August 17, 1999, in Baltimore, Maryland, Secretary Dan Glickman officially launched the national FSP public education campaign to increase food stamp participation rates for all individuals and families who are eligible.

On November 21, 2000, the Department published a final FSP regulation that will make it easier for eligible working families to access food stamps. This regulation allows States to provide a three-month transitional food

stamp benefit to help support households leaving welfare for work. The rule also allows States to relieve working families of the requirement to report modest income changes for up to six-months at a time, reducing the amount of times these families need to spend in food stamp offices.

Part 3: Project Objectives

What is the objective? FNS is interested in supporting research related to improving FSP access by informing potential participants of Program benefits and requirements by facilitating applications through community partnerships.

Why don't eligible people participate in the FSP? Some of the reasons are:

- lack of knowledge or misinformation about program requirements;
- misperception as to eligibility;
- belief that since they are no longer eligible for TANF, they are no longer eligible for food stamps;
- perceived stigma in being seen at a food stamp office, receiving, or using food stamps;
- prior bad experiences with the food stamp office;
- the misunderstanding that the FSP is a "welfare program", when in fact, it is primarily a nutrition program; and/or,
- fear or antipathy to government programs.²

What are FNS's goals for this research? FNS's goals are that these projects will:

- 1. Develop, test, and document feasible, effective, and efficient methods of helping <u>potentially eligible</u> customers learn about, apply for, and/or receive food stamp benefits when eligible.
- 2. I dentify and document those aspects of the FSP that make it difficult for applicants to access the program and help devise and implement practical means to overcome these obstacles.
- 3. Develop and implement community partnerships as a means of reaching potential customers, improving regular customer access, improving customer service by utilizing new technologies, and improving service delivery in the FSP.

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² Reference Part 9 of this document for a list of FNS studies and reports.

- 4. Develop and incorporate appropriate food stamp training activities as an essential component of your project.
- 5. Plan and design research projects as clearly defined experiments. That is, the general, common purpose of every research project funded under these grants is to create and carry out a well-defined and well-documented test of several different aspects of the undertaking.
- 6. Establish formal working relationships with the State/local food stamp office and document these relationships with a letter of commitment or memorandum of understanding. At a minimum, these relationships should assure access to FSP administrative data needed to complete a project assessment report (under prevailing disclosure and privacy policies of the FSP). These partnerships should actively involve the local food stamp offices in the project to enhance the project's success.

Part 4: Project Requirements_

What are the research requirements? The research requirements are listed below:

- 1. Your organization should consult with the State/local food stamp agency to arrive at a proposal and procedures that are mutually agreeable. Your proposal must contain documentation on each person's responsibilities for activities and the final report.
- 2. A copy of a preliminary statement of commitment or memoranda of understanding between the applicant and the State/local food stamp agency *must* accompany the technical proposal. Statements or memoranda of understanding from other partners, if any, are encouraged.
- 3. If your organization is currently under a contract or agreement with the State/local food stamp office to conduct outreach or nutrition education activities, it is important that FNS funds under this grant not be used to cover activities already paid for through a State agency contract or agreement. To ensure that FNS funds provided under these awards will be used to pay for separate and distinct activities associated with the research, applicants should record on the cover sheet that they are under contract or agreement with the State agency to conduct outreach and/or nutrition education activities. The technical proposal shall clearly distinguish and record what activities this award will fund and how these activities differ from the contracted outreach and/or nutrition education activities.
- 4. Research requirements. Grant applicants should keep in mind as they are developing their proposals that FNS is seeking research designed to test the methods and approaches implemented.

5. Data collection responsibilities.

Grantees will be required to establish a mechanism to collect information that will enable measurement of the success of their research. Grantees must specify what types of data will measure the effectiveness of the project and establish a system to collect data on research impacts. The following are examples of the types of data FNS would like included in the final research report:

- pre- and post-participation data and explanation for an increase, decrease, or neutral effect of activities on participation;
- number of customers informed about the FSP as a direct consequence of the grantee's activities (e.g., referral);
- number of customers informed about the FSP and assisted by the grantee or partner to understand the information by each means used, (e.g., presentation at community center, explanation of food stamp application forms and process, explanation of certification procedures, etc.) It will be important to note the site and personnel that provided the information to the potential applicant;
- number of prescreenings conducted. Number of applicants that were eligible and not eligible based on the prescreening tool;
- number of customers actively assisted by each means used. For example, the number of customers helped to:
 - electronically submit the application form;
 - download the food stamp application form from the State web site;
 - fill out food stamp application forms;
 - obtain verification(s); and/or,
 - complete the certification process.
- number of initial applications received at local food stamp offices as a result of the grantee's activities. It is imperative that applications be coded in some manner so that they can be readily

identified as being a part of the research. It also would be useful to be able to discern which particular strategies used in the research were the most effective. The figures should include applications submitted by applicants, project staff, or others;

- number of households certified for food stamp benefits during the course of the research; and/or,
- number of applications denied, and, if available, reasons for denials.

At the conclusion of all of the research, FNS staff will prepare a report based on information provided in the reports. Therefore, it is critical that adequate data collection procedures be implemented to ensure that all information is collected.

Part 5: Guidance for Preparing the Grant Application

Is there a format to follow? Yes. Failure to follow the format may result in reviewers being unable to locate the requested information within your application.

Is a cover sheet needed? Yes. The grant application shall contain a cover sheet. Do not place the grant application in binders.

What information should be recorded on the cover sheet? The following information should be recorded on the cover sheet:

- the name of your organization (do NOT use the name of your research project) and mailing address;
- name of contact person, job title, telephone number, fax number, and email address;
- time period of proposed research project;
- level of grant support requested; and,
- indicate if you are currently receiving an FNS grant or if you are currently under contract with the State/local food stamp agency to conduct outreach or nutrition education activities.

Is there a page limit? You are strongly encouraged to limit your application to 15 pages. The statement of commitment or memoranda of understanding for the research, resumes, and/or other supporting information will not be counted as a page. We also encourage you to use a 12-font in typing your application.

How many sections are recommended? Six sections are recommended.

What should be included in Section 1? Section 1 is the preface and should include:

- copies of statements of commitment and/or memoranda of understanding with local State/local food stamp offices. Completed forms from any partner agencies must be included in this section;
- . a table of contents; and,
- a one page summary of the research. The summary shall contain:
 - a description of the research presented;

- the target group(s) the proposed research is designed to reach;
- the dollar amount requested;
- the proposed use of the funds; and,
- a statement as to whether or not you have an FNS grant or are under a contract or agreement with the State/local food stamp office to conduct outreach or nutrition education activities. If you have a contract to conduct outreach or nutrition education activities, briefly explain how this research will differ from what you are currently doing.

What should be included in Section 2? Section 2 should contain information on the research design and implementation of your proposed model. Provide a clear and detailed description of the following:

- A. **Need for Research**: Discuss the problem that the proposed project addresses and how the expected results of the project can be used to improve program services.
- B. **Goals**: List and discuss each of the goal(s) of the research design and implementation.
- C. **Objectives**: For each of the research project goal(s), list and discuss the associated objective(s). Objective(s) should be specific and measurable.
- D. **Tasks**: Discuss each specific task that will be undertaken in the design and implementation of the research project. Describe how those tasks will meet the stated goals and objectives.

Examples of information to cover:

- describe the planned organization of the research project. Explain the various tasks and who will be responsible for each task;
- describe the operational procedures of the research project including the activities that will be performed, an indication of who will be responsible for each activity, and the overall lines of responsibility;
- describe how the FSP application process will work;
- describe the planned FSP training that will take place to accomplish the specific research project goals. Adequate time should be

- incorporated into the model to ensure that research project staff are trained before initiating contacts with potential applicants; and/or,
- describe the procedures planned for providing adequate information to the eligibility worker to ensure that case determinations are accurate.
- E. Other Information to cover: Provide a description of the following:
 - target population. I dentify and define the target population that your research project will serve;
 - who in your community are not being reached. Provide an estimated number of individuals in your target group that are not being reached;
 - the approximate geographic reach of the research project;
 - the nature of your organization, the population group(s) you currently work with, the types of activities your staff performs on a day-to-day basis, and a brief description of the activities and amount of time your staff spends in the field; and/or,
 - identify and discuss the major anticipated barriers to participation that the target population is experiencing in your location and the activities that will be undertaken to attempt to overcome the barriers to participation.
- F. Waiver Requests. Provide a description of project waivers that the State/local food stamp office has agreed to prepare and submit. (Only State agencies may submit waiver requests.) However, in general, the purpose of the present grant is to encourage the development and test of methods and models to achieve successful outcomes within the framework of existing law and program rules. If a specific waiver from normal program regulations is contemplated, its nature and rationale must be described in detail.
- G. **Project Report:** Provide a description of the proposed method for reporting on the research. The description should include how your organization and State/local food stamp office will cooperatively collect and maintain the needed data and who will be responsible for each aspect of data collection.

The project report should look at both process (what was attempted by the project and by what means) and outcomes (what were the results achieved). Grantees will be the source of most of this information.

FNS plans to place the final project reports on the FNS web site so that other interested parties can learn from the projects. FNS staff will also prepare a report based on the information provided in the final report.

What should be included in Section 3? Section 3 shall contain a summary description of the proposed budget and demonstrate how the research will be cost-effective. The description of the budget should not be an element-by-element breakdown of costs as this type of information is included in the cost proposal. Reference Part 11, List of Attachments. The following types of information should be provided:

- a description explaining how the research funds will be spent. The budget should clearly show how much money will be allocated to the State/local food stamp office and the purpose of such allocation;
- an estimate of the number of individuals expected to be reached and helped to enroll for food stamps and an estimate of the cost-effectiveness of the research project; and,
- a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of project staff so that technical reviewers can clearly discern that funds are not being used:
 - to pay for staff time spent on other programs;
 - on activities funded through the optional State plans for outreach and nutrition education; or,
 - on other FNS reimbursed administrative activities.

What should be included in Section 4? Section 4 should describe the management plans. Provide the following information:

1. Chain of Command and Responsibilities. Provide a flowchart that indicates who has authority over whom. Include a brief written description of the flowchart. Discuss how task leaders will be held accountable to keeping the research on time and within budget. Describe

how and by whom quarterly performance reports to FNS as required by 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 3016.40 will be prepared.

- 2. **Contingency Plans**: Discuss contingency plans for ensuring that the research is not unduly disrupted by any unforeseen changes in key personnel. Where possible, identify specific individuals who will be able to take over research tasks and indicate their qualifications to do so. Discuss the process you will use to select qualified replacements.
- 3. **Outside Personnel**: Discuss how and by whom relationships with all personnel outside of the grant agency will be managed (e.g., personnel from partner agencies, personnel from the local food stamp office, school personnel, consultants, contractors, etc.).
- 4. Task Table: Present a table which includes, in chronological order, every distinct task involved in both the project design and implementation and the project assessment, (e.g., implementation of new procedures pertinent to project, training activities, computer enhancements, data collection, data analysis, report writing, etc.), the beginning and ending date of each task, and the key staff person(s) responsible for overseeing/working on the task. The following is not a comprehensive example:

Task No.	Task Name	Description	Start Date	End Date	Person Responsible for task
1	Develop Written Procedures and Guidelines.	Develop reference guide and research guidelines.	09-01-01	10-15-01	Kammie Smith, Supervisor, Food Stamp Office
2	Develop Computerized Tracking System for FS Application Forms.	Develop software to track food stamp application forms.	09-01-01	10-15-01	Reginald Doe, Computer Programmer
3	Develop Data Collection Tools for Final Report.	Develop forms to be used in project.	09-01-01	10-15-01	Harley Katz, Project Manager

What should be included in Section 5? Section 5 should describe sustainability and transferability of your research. The following information should be provided:

- A. **Sustainability**: Discuss how your research and its results will be sustained financially and administratively once the grant has ended. If the research is a one-time project designed only to be performed during the grant period, discuss why it is sufficient as a one-time research project and how the results of the project will be sustained and/or utilized in the future.
- B. **Transferability**: Discuss how your research and its results might help others and how and why it might be adapted and implemented.

What should be included in Section 6? Section 6 should include information about key personnel. Complete the following:

- A. identify the individuals that qualify as key personnel. Key personnel can include individuals receiving funding through this grant, individuals who are making an in-kind contribution, and contractors/sub-contractors. Key personnel generally are identified as those individuals that:
 - have a direct bearing on the outcome of the research by their participation;
 - bear a substantive responsibility for developing, modifying and achieving the objectives of the research; and,
 - are responsible for managing, administering, or providing oversight for a significant component of the research.
- B. provide the following information on all individuals identified as key personnel:
 - indicate the individual's current position and what their title on the research will be;
 - indicate the individual's time commitment for the time period of your research;
 - description of the individual's specific role and duties in the research.
 When possible, make reference back to the project design,
 implementation or project assessment;

- description of prior relevant experiences and how they relate to specific research duties.
 - for key personnel positions that are currently vacant where someone must be hired to fill the position, provide the following information:
 - position title;
 - a detailed position description with required qualifications, skills, and knowledge;
 - description of specific roles and duties in the research that makes reference back to the research or report narrative;
 - . an anticipated date of hire; and,
 - what arrangements will be made if the position is not filled in a timely manner.
- C. if you attach resumes, vitas, job descriptions or other information, place these materials at the end of section six.

Part 6: Evaluation and Selection of Grant Applications

Will grant applications be screened? Yes. Applications will be initially screened to make sure that they meet the designated focus area. Applications will also be screened for the memoranda of understanding or statements of commitment. Applications that do NOT meet these initial requirements will not be evaluated further.

What happens after the applications are screened? After the initial screening of applications, FNS will convene a panel of technical and program staff from FNS and other qualified individuals with experience in appropriate subjects. Panelists will evaluate and score each application on its own merits in terms of the listed technical criteria. Based on this review and evaluation, the grant panelists will determine which applications to recommend for inclusion in the competitive range for possible grant award.

What happens to applications within the competitive range? The grant panel will recommend competitive range applications to the responsible FNS contracting officer for:

- 1. any necessary discussion and negotiation with grant applicants; and,
- 2. final consideration and selection by policy officials.

What will policy officials consider in making the selections? Policy officials will consider:

- the final technical score ranking and supporting information as reported by the grant review panel;
- any additional information developed through discussions and negotiations between FNS and grant applicants regarding the scope and costeffectiveness of competitive-range proposals;
- the distribution of proposals among the types of applicants and projects and target populations;
- the geographic distribution of potential grant awards; and,
- the judgement of policy officials as to the potential contribution of the proposed research to furthering the mission of FNS in obtaining the necessary data on the objectives of the grant program.

Will officials automatically make the award to the applicants that received the highest technical scores? No. Policy officials will have the authority to select among all of the competitive range proposals and they will not be constrained by the prior ranking of the applications. In addition, FNS reserves the option to select out of ranking order in order to achieve a diversity of research project types. Such diversity may take into consideration such factors as the targeted population or the geographic location. The final rankings, as well as the basis for the selection and determination of grant awards, will be based on the amount of funds available for this research.

What happens to applications in the competitive range? The Contracting Officer may conduct discussions with applicants in the competitive range. After the discussions, applicants may be asked for best and final offers. However, the government reserves the right to award based on the original application and cost proposal. Consequently, it is in the best interest of the applicant to submit the initial application on the most favorable terms from both the technical and cost-effectiveness standpoints.

How are award amounts determined? If an application has been selected for funding and the budget submission is realistic, the application will be funded at the level requested. However, FNS reserves the right to fund applications at a lesser amount if it is judged that the application can be implemented with less, or if Federal funding is not sufficient to fully fund all applications that merit awards. FNS also reserves the right not to fund an application based on the merit of the application.

How are award amounts announced? The Contracting Officer will contact the applicants selected for award.

What happens after the grant is awarded? Once the grant is awarded, the grantee must sign a grant agreement that will contain the terms and conditions of the grant.

TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTS

Public/Private Partnerships for Conducting Outreach Models

The following evaluation criteria and relative weights (maximum scores) will be used by the grant review panel in scoring each proposal.

Ev	aluation Criteria	Maximum Scores
Ur	nderstanding the Research Description:	35
•	Research implementation and design goals are appropriate and the objectives of the research are clearly linked to the research	
	goals, and are measurable.	
•	Research demonstrates methods that could be implemented on a	
	broader (potentially nationwide) scale and a mechanism for assessing the success of these methods.	
	Research project shows a workable relationship with the	
•	State/local food stamp office(s) to obtain the necessary data collection.	
	Statements of commitment or memoranda of understanding	
	clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each partner.	
	Proposal appears promising in terms of the number of targeted	
	individuals that will be reached or helped by the research project	
	in relation to its proposed cost.	
	Proposal shows understanding of the importance of privacy and	
	confidentiality in research project implementation and describes	
	how these will be protected.	
	Proposal shows how the data collection will be accomplished to do	
	the reports.	
Or	ganizational Capacity:	25
	Proposal describes a clearly defined chain of command, the roles	
	and responsibilities of all partners, and appropriate plans for	
	managing outside personnel.	
	Proposal describes how the research model will function, and who	
	is responsible for the various functions of the test.	
•	Proposal demonstrates evidence of the grant applicant's organizational skills and capabilities.	

M	anagement and Budget:	25
	The management plan provides a concise and detailed description	
	of timelines and milestones, how management will ensure that	
	timelines are met, staff qualifications, and contingency plans for	
	key personnel.	
	The proposed budget request is adequate to support the research	
	and provides a detailed description of how Federal and non-	
	Federal resources will be used.	
	Proposal clearly describes the measures that will be used to	
	ensure that FNS grant funds will not be used to pay for staff	
	time spent on other Programs.	
	Proposal reflects an approach that eliminates duplication of	
	services in order to maximize the use of limited Federal, State,	
	and/or County dollars.	
Pertinent Experience:		15
	Proposal documents prior experiences that demonstrate effective	
	outreach methods to reach underserved population groups.	
	Proposal documents experiences that show that partner(s) have a	
	thorough knowledge of their target group(s) and why the target	
	groups do not participate in the FSP.	

Part 7: Reporting Requirements_

What types of reports will be required? Quarterly progress and financial progress reports must be submitted to the FNS in accordance with this solicitation, the Project Grant/Cooperative Agreement, and applicable regulations.

What information should be recorded in quarterly progress reports? As outlined in the applicable Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements, quarterly progress reports must provide a description of the research activities conducted during the reporting period, major accomplishments with completion dates and budget, deviations from the proposed plan, difficulties encountered, solutions developed to overcome difficulties, and major planned activities for the next quarter. The grant applicant is responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the other partners to complete this report. As appropriate to your research, other information that should appear in the quarterly reports as a result of your project:

- total number of applicants prescreened for benefits;
- total number of applicants referred to the food stamp office;
- total number of food stamp applications filed at sites other than the local food stamp office;
- total number of applications filed electronically;
- total number of food stamp applications filed as a result of the research project;
- total number of food stamp applications approved; and,
- total number of food stamp project applications denied, and reasons for denials.

What are the due dates for the Quarterly Progress Reports? The following is a list of tentative due dates:

Task	Description of Tasks	Due Dates	
No.			
1	First Quarterly Progress Report	March 31, 2001	
2	Second Quarterly Progress Report	June 30, 2001	
3	Third Quarterly Progress Report	September 30, 2001	
4	Fourth Quarterly Progress Report	December 31, 2001	
5	Fifth Quarterly Progress Report	March 31, 2002	
6	Six Quarterly Progress Report	June 30, 2002	
7	Seventh Quarterly Progress Report	September 30, 2002	
8	Eighth Quarterly Progress Report	December 31, 2002	
12	Draft Research Project Final Report	November 1, 2002	
13	Final Research Project Report	January 15, 2003	
	Actual Due Dates Will Be Negotiated Prior To Award		

What types of information should be included in the final research project report? The final report will be a descriptive report, summarizing research experiences, and in particular documenting the types of food stamp participation barriers encountered and how these were dealt with, what went right or wrong, accomplishments, and other information that would be of interest to State agencies and nonprofit organizations interested in adopting similar outreach strategies. The report should mention the transferability of the results to other counties or States. The following information, as a result of your project, should also appear in the report if it is appropriate to your research:

- pre- and post-participation data and explanation for an increase, decrease, or neutral effect of activities on participation;
- total number of customers prescreened for benefits;
- total number of customers referred to the food stamp office;
- total number of food stamp research project applications filed at sites other than the local food stamp office;
- total number of food stamp research project applications filed electronically;
- total number of food stamp applications filed as a result of the research project;

- total number of food stamp research project applications approved; and,
- total number of food stamp research project applications denied, and reasons for denials.

Will FNS comment on the draft report? Yes, the final report must be submitted in draft in hard copy as well as in electronic format (disk or CD-ROM). FNS must be provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft report. FNS's comments must be incorporated into the final version. The draft report will then be finalized and submitted to FNS. Once FNS receives the final version of the report in both hard copy and electronic version (disk or CD-ROM), it will be placed on the FNS web site.

At the conclusion of the research, what should be submitted to FNS?
The following information, if appropriate to your model, should be submitted to FNS:

Deliverable	Description of Deliverables	Hard	CD-ROM
Number		Copies	or Disk*
1	All outreach materials developed and/or	2	1
	used in the research. This includes		
	guidelines, reference books, etc.**		
2	All training materials.**	2	1
3	All media or publicity releases.**	2	1
4	All data collection instruments that will be	2	1
	used for the research project.**		
5	Quarterly Progress Reports.	2	1
6	Draft Research Project Final Report.	2	1
7	Final Research Project Report	2	1
* If available, electronic versions must be provided to FNS on a disk or on a			
CD-ROM.			
** The research materials are due as released.			

Part 8: Formal Application Procedures_

What are the terms and conditions of award? Regulations as applicable:³

- 7 CFR Part 3015: "Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations" for Entitlement Programs (Applicability: additional information on the principles for determining allowable costs under USDA grants and cooperative agreements as set forth in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-87, A-21, A-122, and 48 CFR 31.2, respectively. These regulations also contain the general provisions that apply to all grants and cooperative agreements made by USDA.)
- 7 CFR Part 3017: Subparts A-E "Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)"
- 7 CFR Part 3017: Subparts F "Government-wide Requirements for Drugfree Workplace (Grants)"
- 7 CFR Part 3018: "New Restrictions on Lobbying"
- 7 CFR Part 3019: "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profit Organizations"
- OMB Circular A-21: Cost Principles for Educational Institutions
- OMB Circular A-87: Cost Principles for State and Local Governments
- OMB Circular A-122: Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations
- 41 CFR 1-15.2 (FAR Part 31): Cost Principles for For-Profit Organizations

³ 7 CFR Part 3016: "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments" will be incorporated into the grant or cooperative agreement if awards are made to State/local school districts.

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 OMB Circular A-133: Audits of State, Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations

Grants awarded under this solicitation will contain the following terms and conditions, and submission of a grant proposal will be considered as acceptance of these provisions by the applicant.

ARTICLE I - Governing Documents

The Grantee shall furnish the necessary personnel, materials, supplies, services, facilities and otherwise do all things necessary to work on the project set forth in the following documents which are hereby incorporated into this Grant:

- 1. Request for Application Package; and,
- 2. The Grantee's application.

ARTICLE II - Order Of Precedence

In the event of any inconsistency between provisions of the Grant, the inconsistency shall be resolved by giving precedence in the following order:

- a. Grant Terms and Conditions
- b. Request for Application Package
- c. Grantee's Application
- d. Part 3017, 3018, 3019 of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as applicable.
- e. Assurances that the following subparts of Part 3015 to State governments:
 - 1. subpart Q, paragraph 3015.158 on competition;
 - 2. subpart T on cost principles.

ARTICLE III - Billing Instructions

Each claim for reimbursement, in an original and two copies, will be submitted on SF-270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement, in accordance

with Part 3019.52 of Title 7 of the CFR, Subpart C - Financial Reporting. The SF-270 shall be submitted monthly to the Accounting Division at the address below.

USDA/FNS Accounting Division 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 7th Floor Alexandria, VA 22302

ARTICLE IV - Method of Payment

After award and not later than 14 days before an SF-270 is submitted, the grantee shall designate a financial institution for receipt of electronic funds transfer payments, and shall submit this designation to the Contracting Officer or to the designated office indicated above.

- (a) The grantee will receive at or shortly after time of award a SF-3881, Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form, with Agency Information section completed by FNS. The grantee will complete the Payee/Company Information Section of the form. The grantee will have an appropriate bank official complete, sign and return the Financial Information Section. The grantee will then forward the original completed copy to the Contracting Officer or to the address indicated above.
- (b) Any changes to the information furnished under this agreement shall be furnished to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Contract Management Branch, Room 222, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302, to the attention of the Contracting Officer, in writing at least 30 calendar days before submitting vouchers to avoid payments to erroneous addresses or bank accounts.
- (c) The document(s) furnishing the information required in paragraphs (a) and (b) must be dated and contain the signature, title, and telephone number of an official authorized to provide it, as well as the grantee's name and agreement number.

Payments under this Agreement will be via Transfer Payment method.

Grantees will be reimbursed on a monthly basis after receipt of a properly completed SF-270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement to be determined at time of award.

ARTICLE V - Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations

The following parts of Title 7 of the U. S. CFR are incorporated by reference and are hereby considered part of this Grant, as applicable. These regulations have the same force and effect as if given in full text. Upon written request, the Contracting Officer will make the full text(s) available to the Grantee.

- Part 3015 Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, where applicable
- Part 3017 Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Government wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace
- Part 3018 New Restrictions on Lobbying

The Grantee is reminded of its responsibility to include the above provisions and obtain certifications, as appropriate, from lower tier subawardees.

ARTICLE VI - Grant Administrator

A Grant Administrator (GA) will be designated by the Contracting Officer and all grantees will be notified regarding the identity of the GA at the time of award.

The GA's responsibilities shall include monitoring of the Grantee's performance, progress and compliance with all substantial project objectives, in accordance with Article VII, Technical Oversight, and Article X, Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance and Financial Reporting.

ARTICLE VII - Technical Oversight

- A. Performance of the work under this Grant shall be subject to the technical oversight of the GA. The GA will monitor the Grantee's performance and notify the Grantee in writing of deficiencies observed and direct appropriate action to effect correction. The GA will record and report to the Contracting Officer incidents or nonconforming services, delays, or general problems.
- B. Technical direction must be within the scope of the Governing Documents (Article I). The GA does not have the authority to issue any technical direction which:
 - (1) constitutes an assignment of additional work outside the general scope of the grant;
 - (2) in any manner causes an increase or decrease in the total amount of the Grant or the time required for performance;
 - (3) changes or waives any of the expressed terms and conditions of the grant;
 - (4) interferes with the Grantee's right to perform the terms and conditions of the Grant; and/or,
 - (5) places the GA as a supervisor of the Grantee's employees.
- C. The GA may, with the agreement of the Grantee, request the Contracting Officer to modify the Grant to:
 - (1) increase or decrease the general scope of the Grant;
 - (2) increase or decrease the total amount of the Grant or the time required for performance; and,
 - (3) change or waive any of the expressed terms and conditions of the Grant.

- D. The Grantee shall proceed promptly with implementation of the technical direction properly issued by the GA in the manner prescribed by this Article.
- E. If, in the opinion of the Grantee, instruction or direction issued by the GA is within one of the categories B(1) through B(5) above, the Grantee shall not proceed but shall notify the Contracting Officer, in writing, within five (5) working days after receipt of any such instruction or direction, requesting the Grant be modified accordingly.

ARTICLE VIII - Copyrights

The author or Grantee is free to copyright any books, publications or other copyrightable materials developed in the course of or under this Grant. However, the Government shall reserve a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use the work for Government purposes. (Reference 7 CFR 3019.36 "Intangible Property")

ARTICLE IX - Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance and Financial Reporting

- A. Consistent with the requirements of Part 3019.50, Subpart C, grant recipients shall monitor the progress of grant and subgrant supported activities to assure that performance goals are being achieved.

 Grantees shall submit quarterly progress reports. These progress reports shall contain brief information on the following:
 - (1) actual activities compared to planned project goals;
 - (2) if planned goals are not met, reasons why; and,
 - (3) additional pertinent information.
- B. Grantees are advised to pay special attention to Part 3019.51(f), Significant Developments, for reporting requirements relating to

problems, delays or adverse conditions which might materially impair the grantee's ability to carry out the planned project.

C. The requirements to submit Financial Status Report, Standard Form 269 and 269A, and Federal Cash Transactions Report, Standard Form 272, are hereby waived.

ARTICLE X - Key Personnel

The Grantee's Key Personnel are as follows:

<u>Name</u> <u>Title</u>

*** To be completed by FNS at time of grant award ***

The grantee shall obtain prior written approval of the Contracting Officer:

- (1) to continue the project during any continuous period of time more than three (3) months without the active direction of an approved Project Director;
- (2) for its selection of a replacement for the Project Director or Principal Investigator;
- (3) for its selection of a replacement for any other persons names and expressly designated as key project people in the grant, subgrant, or cooperative agreement award document; or
- (4) to permit the Project Director (or anyone covered by this Article) to devote substantially less effort to the project than was anticipated when the award was made.

ARTICLE XI - Assurances

As a condition of this Grant, the Grantee assures and certifies that it is in compliance with and will comply in the course of the Grant with all applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders and other generally applicable

requirements, including those set out in Standard Form 424B, Assurances-Non-Construction Programs, which are hereby incorporated in this grant by reference and such other statutory provisions as are specifically set forth herein.

ARTICLE XII - Project Performance Period

The project performance period for this Grant is *** through***
During this period, the Grant may be amended in writing by the Contracting Officer any time upon mutual agreement between the parties. This grant may be terminated by either of the parties hereto upon 60-calendar days notice, in writing, to the other party.
*** To be completed by FNS at time of grant award ***
ARTICLE XIII - Estimated Costs
The total estimated cost for this grant is*** Expenditures in excess of this amount will be borne by the Grantee and will not be reimbursable by the Government. The Grantee may charge to the grant only

excess of this amount will be borne by the Grantee and will not be reimbursable by the Government. The Grantee may charge to the grant only allowable costs (reference applicable cost principles) resulting from obligations incurred during the funding period and pre-award costs authorized by the Federal-awarding agency.

*** To be completed by FNS at time of grant award ***

ARTICLE XIV - Grant Administration

The Contracting Officer is the only person authorized to approve changes in any of the requirements of this Grant. In the event the Grantee effects any change at the direction of any person other than the Contracting Officer, the changes will be considered to have been made without authority and no adjustment will be made in the Grant amount to cover any increase in costs incurred as a result thereof.

The Government Administrator to be contacted in regard to Grant Terms and Conditions is:

Name: *** Designated at time of award

Telephone: (703) 305-2250 **Title:** Contract Specialist

The Grantees Administrator to be contacted in regard to Grant Terms and Conditions is:

Name: ***
Telephone: ***
Title: ***

*** To be completed by FNS at time of grant award ***

ARTICLE XV - Confidentiality of Information

- (a) Confidential information, as used in this Article, means:
 - (1) information or data of a personal nature about an individual; or,
 - (2) information or data submitted by or pertaining to an institution or organization.
- (b) In addition to the types of confidential information described in (a)(1) and (2) above, information which might require special consideration with regard to the timing of its disclosure may be derived from studies or research, as appropriate, during which public disclosure of preliminary invalidated findings could create erroneous conclusions which might threaten public health or safety if acted upon.
- (c) The Contracting Officer and the Grantee may, by mutual consent, identify elsewhere in this Grant specific information and/or categories of information which the Government will furnish to the Grantee or that the Grantee is expected to generate which is confidential. Similarly, the Contracting Officer and the Grantee may,

by mutual consent, identify such confidential information from time to time during the performance of the Grant.

- (d) If it is established that information to be utilized under this Grant is subject to the Privacy Act, the Grantee will follow the rules and procedures of disclosure set forth in the Privacy Act of 1974, and implementing regulations and policies, with respect to systems of records determined to be subject to the Privacy Act.
- (e) Confidential information, as defined in (a)(1) and (2) above, shall not be disclosed without the prior written consent of the individual, institution or organization.
- (f) Written advance notice of at least 30 days will be provided to the Contracting Officer of the Grantee's intent to release findings of studies or research, as appropriate, which have the possibility of adverse effects on the public or the Federal agency, as described in (b) above. If the Contracting Officer does not pose any objections in writing within the 30-day period, the Grantee may proceed with disclosure.
- (g) Whenever the Grantee is uncertain with regard to the proper handling of material under the Grant, or if the material in question is subject to the Privacy Act or is confidential information subject to the provisions of this Article, the Grantee shall obtain a written determination from the Contracting Officer prior to any release, disclosure, dissemination, or publication.
- (h) The provisions of paragraph (e) of this Article shall not apply when the information is subject to conflicting or overlapping provisions in other Federal, State, or local laws.

ARTICLE XVI - Certifications

(1) Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) and Government wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants) are hereby incorporated by reference (Re: 7 CFR Part 3017).

- (2) The provisions of 7 CFR Part 3018, New Restrictions on Lobbying are incorporated by reference.
- (3) The above mentioned regulations have the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Upon written request, the Contracting Officer will make the full text available.
- (4) The Grantee is reminded of its responsibility to include the above provisions and obtain certifications, as appropriate, from lower tier subawardees.

ARTICLE XVII - Publication for Professional Audiences

The Grantee may report results of their projects under this Grant in papers and articles for professional audiences, as appropriate. The GA shall receive a copy of such items prior to submission and be allowed 30-days from receipt for peer review. The Grantee agrees to carefully consider comments resulting from this peer review, and justify those comments not incorporated in the article. Any publications or articles resulting from this project shall acknowledge the support of FNS and will include a disclaimer as follows:

This project was funded, in part, through Grant Number _____ *** ____ with the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The opinions or conclusions expressed herein do not, however, necessarily reflect those of the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

FNS reserves the right to publish the final reports under this project for public dissemination, independently of publication plans by the Grantee.

FNS Web Site: WWW.FNS.USDA.GOV

Final Evaluation Report: Food Stamp Program Client Enrollment Assistance Demonstration Projects, July 1999. Executive Summary: www.fns.usda.gov/OANE/menu/published/FSP/FILES/clienroll.pdf

The Reaching the Working Poor and Poor Elderly Study: What We Learned and Recommendations for Future Research. December 1999. Executive Summary: <u>WPPERecsum.htm</u> FILES/WPPERecsum.htm

Report on the Pretest of the Reaching the Working Poor and Poor Elderly Survey, Volume 1. December 1999. Executive Summary: WPPERptsum.htm<FILES/WPPERptsum.htm>

Reaching Those in Need: Food Stamp Participation Rates in the States
July 2000. Report summary:
FSPart2000sum.htm <FILES/FSPart2000sum.HTM>

Trends in FSP Participation Rates: Focus on September 1997. November 1999. Executive Summary: trend97sum.htm <FILES/trend97sum.htm>

Evaluation of SSI/FSP Joint Processing Alternatives Demonstration: Final Report. January 2000. Executive Summary:

<u>SSI-FSPsum.htm <FILES/SSI-FSPsum.htm></u>

Part 10: Optional Guidance to Fill Out Standard Form 424_

Can you provide guidance to fill out Standard Form 424? The following instructions are provided:

- Complete item numbers: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18.
- Do NOT complete item numbers: 3, 4, 10, 12, and 16.

Specific instructions are for the items to be completed:

- **Item 1:** Mark "Application" Non-Construction box.
- **Item 2:** Date application submitted to Federal Agency.
- Legal name of applicant, name of primary organizational unit which will direct the activity, complete address of applicant, and name and telephone number of person who can provide further information about this request and to whom notification of results can be sent.
- Item 6: Employer identification number of applicant as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. (Please complete the attached IRS Privacy Act Statement, FNS-711).
- **Item 7:** Enter the appropriate letter in the space provided.
- Item 8: Check the "new" box.
- **Item 9:** Name the USDA/Food and Nutrition Service.
- **Item 11:** Enter a brief descriptive title of the project.
- **Item 13:** Estimated number of months to complete study after Federal funds are available.
- **Item 14:** Enter the number of the Congressional district(s) where the project is located.

Item 15: Enter the amount of Federal funds requested and the amounts of funds from other than Federal sources which will be contributed to the proposed project.

Item 17: Refer to instructions.

Item 18: To be signed by an *authorized* representative of the applicant.

Can help be provided to complete Standard Form 424a? Provide line item detail and detailed calculations for each budget object class identified in Section B, Budget Categories (a-j), of SF424a. Detailed calculation must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. Budget details must be provided for both Federal and non-Federal resources.

For purposes of preparing the budget "Federal resources" refers only to the requested grant funds. Non-Federal resources are all other Federal and non-Federal resources, including in-kind contributions. It is suggested that budget amounts and computations be presented in a columnar format: first column, object class categories; second column, Federal resources; next column, non-Federal resources; and last column, total budget. A separate budget page is required for each budget year requested.

Part 11: List of Attachments_

- Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance (for Non-Construction)
- Standard Form 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs
- Cost Proposal, which provides additional information by cost element for each category of cost included on the SF 424a
- Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants),
 Alternative I For Grantees Other Than Individuals, Form AD-1049, AD-1050, and AD-1052)
- Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters (Forms AD-1047 and AD-1048)
- Notice to Applicants Certification/Disclosure Requirements Related to Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL), if applicable
- Standard Form 424B, Assurances Non-Construction Programs
- Supplemental Form for Collecting Taxpayer I dentifying Numbers, FNS-711
- Employer's I dentification Number and Privacy Act (FNS Form-711)